

## BOOK REVIEW

*Flora of Maine: A Manual for Identification of Native and Naturalized Vascular Plants of Maine* by Arthur Haines and Thomas F. Vining. 1998. 837 pp. with 10 blank, numbered pages for notes. ISBN 0-9664874-0-0 \$45.00 plus shipping (paperback). V. F. Thomas Co., Bar Harbor, ME.

Botanists in Maine can claim a number of luminaries over the past two centuries. We begin with John Josselyn, who compiled the first list of plants observed in Scarborough in 1672. Merritt L. Fernald and his colleagues named our state botanical society in honor of Josselyn a few years before joining with others in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to create the New England Botanical Club. The authors of the recently published *Flora of Maine*, Arthur Haines and Thomas F. Vining, acknowledge a nearly unbroken thread of field-oriented catalogs and listings that have provided information for their work. This latest manual is the first (nearly) complete flora.

Two years and two months seem hardly enough time to produce a state flora, yet Haines and Vining have called on years of experience in the field, in university classrooms and laboratories, and amongst a large number of colleagues and advisors to produce a credible and accessible volume. It is an essential volume for the libraries of New England botanists and institutional libraries everywhere.

The most important element of a flora, for this reader, is its keys. Every manual treats a different segment of the plant world defined by a combination of factors, including political geography, topography, taxonomic group, or the particular interests and needs of readers. Haines and Vining have prepared keys to the vascular plants native or naturalized to Maine, and they warn that such a scope allows them to use characters for identification that might not be appropriate elsewhere. Nevertheless, the keys to families (following Judd et al. 1999) are sound and usable: well written, segmented into logical groups, and based on easily recognizable field characters.

Keys to genera and species comprise essential characters wherever possible. Complete descriptions of genera and species are not found here as they are in *Gray's Manual* (Fernald 1950) or the *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and*

*Adjacent Canada* (Gleason and Cronquist 1991). Yet the reader can easily build such complete descriptions from the information used to create the keys. Special notes appear for taxa that have a designated rank of rarity following the criteria of the Maine Natural Areas Program.

The *Flora of Maine* should certainly be found on the desk or in the satchel of Maine's resident and visiting botanists. It may be a model for botanists in neighboring New England states, and perhaps it will inspire the long-overdue revision of our most important regional flora, *Gray's Manual* (Fernald 1950). The University of Maine should be proud of the work of authors Arthur Haines and Tom Vining.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- FERNALD, M. L. 1950. *Gray's Manual of Botany*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (corrected printing 1993). Dioscorides Press, Portland, OR.
- GLEASON, H. A. AND A. CRONQUIST. 1991. *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*. The New York Botanical Garden, New York.
- JUDD, W. S., C. S. CAMPBELL, E. A. KELLOGG, AND P. S. STEVENS. 1999. *Plant Systematics: A Phylogenetic Approach*. Sinauer Associates, Inc., Sunderland, MA.

—W. DONALD HUDSON, JR., Chewonki Foundation, Wiscasset, ME 04578-4822.